

**Optional Study and Practice for *Consciousness Is What I Am*,  
Chapter 4, “Consciousness”**

**Excerpts from the Recording That Were Not Included in the Book**

Chapter 4, “Consciousness,” in *Consciousness Is What I Am* is almost a transcript for the source recording, “I’ As Consciousness,” but there are a few meaningful sections of the recording that were not included in the book chapter. Three of these are quoted below for your reference.

**How We Become Conscious of the Spiritual Realm**

*In this part of the recording, Joel had been talking about the physical and mental states of consciousness, and then he continued with this insight on spiritual consciousness.*

“And then eventually enters the scene a something, and this is a very strange something. The first record we have of it is in India, and it is a root word—‘Kr’ in Sanskrit—and Kr is the root word for Krishna. And today, Krishna is presumably the first man on earth to have broken through to the spiritual realm. **But Krishna wasn’t a man. Krishna was the divine Consciousness which broke through into the mind of a man and then was identified as if it were a man. But it wasn’t. It was Consciousness. It was the divine, or spiritual Consciousness, which broke through, permeated the mind of an individual, bringing to light the first spiritual awareness, or fourth-dimensional awareness.**

“Now the marvelous thing about this is that the word ‘Christ’ is ‘Chr,’ which is the same root as Kr and has the same meaning: light or enlightenment. And so, **we have today Christ accepted as a man. But it wasn’t. Christ is the illumined, infinite, divine Consciousness, or God, breaking through the mind of an individual and appearing as man, but not man—Christ, light, illumined consciousness.** So, we have later—well, not later than Christ—at 500 years BC, we have Buddha, again a word meaning light, enlightenment, receiving that same consciousness of Krishna. And **wherever the light appears, be assured it is that original, infinite, divine Consciousness which has broken through, and an individual has become aware of it,** just as the animal man, originally aware only of body and things, later becomes a mental being aware of mathematics, astronomy, architecture, beauty, philosophy.

“So you see, the mental and the physical man—who really was never a mental or physical man but was a **state of consciousness at those levels**—now breaks through the limitation of the mind. And, as the Master told the disciples to ‘remain in the city until you are endowed from on high,’ this is what happens when a person who is a partly mental and partly physical being all of a sudden receives light, illumination, initiation, call it whatever you will. He is endowed from on high and now has broken through and is not merely conscious of a physical world and a mental world but is conscious now of a spiritual world.

“So that whether you are speaking of the physical man, the animal man—wasn’t he a state of physical consciousness? And when you reach that same man breaking through and

beginning to perceive philosophy, or religion, or mathematics, can you not see that he was now the same man, only conscious of a higher degree of life? He no longer lived by the pains and pleasures of the body alone. Some of those still remained, but remember, he now entered a world where there were [also] pains and pleasures of the mind. When that same individual is endowed from on high or breaks through and becomes conscious of the spiritual realm, that individual still, to some extent, knows pains and pleasures of the body, pains and pleasures of the mind, but to this now comes the greater pleasures, the awareness of the Spirit, consciousness of the Spirit.”

### **New Insight on the Story of the Prodigal Son**

*Joel talks about a new insight that came to him about the story of the prodigal son in the Bible:*

“So it has been revealed to me that the story of the prodigal son in the Bible is not what it appears to be. It is not the story of an individual who left his father’s house and returned. It is the story of human consciousness that left its Father’s house to wander on earth, setting up a selfhood of its own and finally coming to the place of creating those wonderful things that it now wonders if it won’t destroy its life.

“See what a world I have made me! I have split the atom! I have created the greatest power there is on earth, and now I’m afraid it’s going to devour me. Frankenstein—the human mind creating its own destruction, bringing itself to a feast with the swine—and now, not only individually, but collectively saying, ‘Where do we go from here? Now that we’ve made this great power, we don’t control it; we fear it.’

“And so at this moment, you may be assured that the human mind is eating its banquet with the swine. It is at the lowest ebb it has ever been in the history of the world. It doesn’t know if it can survive until tomorrow. And you can be assured of this, that in the back of that mind, it is saying, ‘I wish I were in my Father’s house’ or ‘Is there a Father’s house for me to return to?’ So you may be assured of this, consciously or unconsciously, the entire world at this moment is reaching out for spiritual light to get away from the Frankenstein it has created.

“Now, there is only one return, and there is only one way of returning. If you have made a poison and you are afraid of it; if you have made a bomb and you are afraid of it; if you have created an ideology and you’re now afraid of it; there is only one return, and that is to the realization that I am Consciousness, not form; I am Consciousness, not mind; but the Consciousness that I am is God. And this Consciousness governs all form, so I need no longer fear the poison, or the bomb, or the ideology, for the Consciousness that is God is the master of all forms. *I, Consciousness, have overcome the world.*”

### **I Am the Consciousness That Knows Myself**

*Joel makes a key point about consciousness:*

“Except for consciousness, I wouldn’t even know myself as body or mind, so behind the body and the mind, there must be the consciousness that is knowing me as body and mind. And that consciousness which knows me as body and mind, I am. **That is the being that I**

**am: that which knows me as mind and body**, that which through me is conscious not only of physical form and mental form but of the things of God.”

## The Case for Contemplation

Joel’s books and recordings are filled with the letter of truth about true identity and the nature of individual being. If you use the [electronic search tool](#) and look for instances of phrases such as “true identity,” “who am I,” “what am I,” or “nature of individual being,” you will be amazed at how much there is to read and hear. In this chapter and in the source recording, Joel recounts how he came to the realization of who and what he was, and it is helpful to read and hear about his experience and revelations. But reading and listening often leave us with only intellectual understanding. Reading and listening are mental activities, and we do not experience the truth of our being, our identity, through the mind. Granted, intellectual understanding is a necessary and valuable first step along the way, but to come to the point where we can reap the full benefit of true identity, we must have our own unique experience of that truth.

With such a rich treasure of books and recordings readily available to us, it can be tempting to read more and to listen more, read more and listen more. In so doing, it is possible to develop a very robust and clear intellectual understanding of the correct letter of truth about the nature of individual being. We might even mistake that deep understanding for realization. But intellectual understanding alone is not realization. When we have realization, the truth becomes our reality. As Joel said:

“To know the correct letter of truth is a good foundation for the revelation, unfoldment, and spiritual discernment of truth, the spiritual consciousness of truth. . . . No matter how perfect you become in stating the truth as it is found in the Infinite Way writings, please do not have too much faith in it, or you may stumble and fall. It is not the statement of truth that does the work; it is the inner realization of truth. . . . **It is much better for a student to use two or three statements as reminders of truth; meditate upon them; ponder them; and then rest, and let God do the work. Let spiritual consciousness unfold.**”<sup>1</sup>

“You are entitled to understand [a] subject as it unfolds to **you**, rather than to accept somebody else’s version of what it means. No matter what I would say to you, it will not satisfy you . . . because what I would tell you happens to be my individual experience, and why should that satisfy you, unless you had the experience?”<sup>2</sup>

In other words, do not blindly accept statements from Joel or anyone else about your true being and identity. Strive for your own experience, your own conscious realization of the *I* of your being.

As Joel says in this chapter and recording, he came to the realization of his true identity through contemplation and reflection. You may even recall some classes in which he says that contemplation, questioning, and pondering brought him to the realization and experience that he was not his body. The “body exercise,” which Joel references frequently,<sup>3</sup> came from that experience.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Master Speaks*, Chapter 11, “The Allness of God.”

<sup>2</sup> Recording 221B: 1958 New York Closed Class, “God Is I”

<sup>3</sup> You can review the body exercise on any of these recordings: 462A, starting at minute 52:10; 513B, starting at minute 5:32; or 59A, starting at minute 15:03.

But even if we have the experience that we are not the body or in the body, further questions arise: “If I am not the body or in the body, who am I? What am I? Where am I? What is my function, my purpose in life?” As Joel says in this chapter, these questions have been a mystery throughout the ages and to find the answers, we must ponder the questions through contemplation, meditation, and introspection. We must go deep within ourselves and ask the Father, the Christ of our being, for the experience. Then, in quietness and in confidence, little by little, *I* begins to reveal Itself from within.

Joel says,

“We do not need to accept the word of a man, a woman, or of a book. We have the divine right to go to the center of our own being and ask the question:

‘Father, who am I? Father, what am I? Father, for what purpose was I created in Thy image and likeness? I know that as a human being, I am not fulfilling any divine function. I know that as a human being, my days are numbered. I have missed the way. Now reveal Thyself and Thy plan, and Thy name, and Thy nature, and my relationship to Thee, and Thy relationship to me.’

“If we are sincere truth-seekers, eventually all truth must be revealed to us from within, for every man must be taught of God. No teacher is worthy of the name of teacher who does not reveal to us that we have access to the entire kingdom of God, of Truth, of Life, within ourselves, and that we are dependent on no man, no teacher, no teaching.”<sup>4</sup>

As an Infinite Way student, you may have thought and read about true identity. You may have prayed about it and contemplated it. But ask yourself, “Do I have a deep experience of the *I* that I am? What do I really know about my true identity? Is it just what I have read in books, or what I have heard on recordings, or what someone has told me? Or do I know what I know by actual experience?” If you cannot say that you know the *I* of your being by actual experience, now is a good time to focus on directly experiencing that *I*, and not being satisfied with what you have read in books about it. There is something within you that can impart to you the whole secret of *I*, but you must go within to the center of your being for that impartation.

### **Practice, Practice, Practice**

So . . . one very appropriate way to work with the lesson of this chapter and recording is to do as Joel did—go within for that deep experience of the *I*. Yes, study the chapter and listen to the recording—multiple times, if you are so led—but then make contemplation the centerpiece of your practice. As Joel says, “Don’t go to books; don’t go to man whose breath is in his nostril; don’t go to princes. Don’t go out looking for a man with a white robe. The only one who can reveal You to you is *I* in the midst of you. You must go within and seek.”<sup>5</sup>

As Joel points out in this lesson, at first, we recognize that as a person, as a human being, I am not God. That which I have known as myself and which others know as me, is not *I* at all. It is a false idea that I have entertained about myself and that others have entertained about me.

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<sup>4</sup> *Living the Illumined Life*, Chapter 5, “Putting Off the Old Man and Rebirth.”

<sup>5</sup> Recording 214B: 1958 Second Chicago Closed Class, “Spiritual Power Dissolves the Appearances of Sense.”

Even when you arrive at the point where you can say that *I* is your true being, there are still questions:

- Who am I?
- What am I?
- Where am I?
- What is my function?

So we must delve deeply and discover the truth for ourselves.

One approach could be the one Joel suggested above, where he said, “It is much better for a student to use two or three statements as reminders of truth; meditate upon them; ponder them; and then rest, and let God do the work. Let spiritual consciousness unfold.” So you might choose two or three statements from the book chapter or the recording that relate to the nature of *I* and use these as anchors for your contemplation. For example,

- “There is Something that is not a word, but is your Self, and that is *I*. *I* is not a word: *I* is my Self.”
- “Consciousness is what I am because all there is to me is being conscious of.”
- “The Consciousness that is God is the consciousness that you are.”

Another approach could be to slowly repeat the word “I” to yourself. What do you experience?

Or you can just ask yourself one of the questions and ponder it: “Who am I?” or “What am I?” or “Where am I?” or “What is my function?”

Whichever approach you choose, it can be helpful to jot down what comes to you or what you observe or experience. You might see some ways in which you have mis-identified yourself as well as some in which you have correctly identified yourself. Perhaps you will see that at times, you may have identified yourself with body, or mind, or age, or gender, or ethnicity, or even with a role in your family, your business, or your profession. Becoming aware of any erroneous identifications can help you release them.